

SFD Dispatch Policy and Guideline Manual

Section Title: Fire Dispatch Guidelines

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DISPATCHING THE CALL

The order of information to give when dispatching a call shall be the following:

1. Alert tones (toned in order of due engine response, not numeric order)
2. Units to respond
3. Type of call
4. Business / Common Name if applicable
5. Address or intersection
6. Cross streets
7. Pause for 2 to 3 seconds and repeat steps 2-6

TYPE OF CALL

When giving the type of call, keep the information as specific as possible but also be concise. By giving more specific information it allows the responding crews to start thinking about the situation they are responding to and what they will need for each situation. Avoid using general terms such as "structure fire" or "fire alarm". For a house fire you would state "residential structure fire" as your type of call or "commercial structure fire" when a commercial structure is involved. If it is an outbuilding, storage building, shed, etcetera, this information needs to be included in the initial dispatch. When dispatching service calls, try to give the nature of the call in the initial dispatch such as "lifting assist". This lets the responding unit(s) be more prepared to choose their mode of response and protective clothing.

In the initial dispatch of alarms, state that it is a residential or commercial alarm. On residential alarms, further descriptive information needs to be given on the post dispatch. For example, if the alarm is showing smoke alarm or heat detector, this will be given in your follow up information. On commercial alarms, if specific information is known before the initial dispatch, the dispatcher needs to include that information. For example, if the alarm is called in showing water flow, the dispatcher should say "Commercial Water Flow Alarm". If no specific information is provided by the alarm company, then the particulars can be included in the post dispatch information. If the alarm is cancelled prior to dispatch, state this in the initial dispatch. When dispatching units to a natural gas leak, include whether the leak is indoors or outdoors in the initial dispatch.

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LOCATION

If the call is at a residence, simply give the address and street name. Address numbers are confusing to understand when the digits are given individually. To avoid confusion, address numbers shall be given according to the following examples:

1. 205 would be "TWO-OH-FIVE"
2. 2711 would be "TWENTY-SEVEN ELEVEN"
3. 1410 would be "FOURTEEN TEN"
4. 14417 would be "FOURTEEN FOUR SEVENTEEN"

Street names shall be given as clearly as possible. Many city streets have very similar sounding names. Therefore it is important to clearly identify the correct street name when dispatching a call. Dispatchers should be familiar with the street names in the city that sound the same, and should avoid confusion from one street to another. Example: Velma and Thelma; Christy and Christine; Ruby and Trudi; Maple Avenue and Maple Drive; Johnson Avenue and Johnson Road. Dispatchers should also be aware of roads that have the same name in different jurisdictions. Example: Robinson in Springdale and Robinson in Lowell; Main in Springdale and Main in Johnson.

When dispatching to a business location, always provide the name of the business as well as the address on the initial dispatch. Do not give a business name only since all units may not be familiar with the business location. There are also several businesses in Springdale that have more than one location. For example: McDonald's on Robinson, Thompson and Sunset.

Many calls from banks or poultry factories come in from a PBX system that will only display their main location on the ANI/ALI. As with all calls, the dispatcher needs to verify the address of the emergency so the proper assignment is sent to the correct location. When dispatching to a large facility, be sure to obtain exactly where the emergency is at the facility and which entrance is best to use.

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STREET NAMES AND HIGHWAY NUMBERS

When dispatching calls on highways within the city limits of Springdale, dispatchers should use the city street names instead of highway numbers assigned to that highway. By referring to highways as their street names, there will be less confusion as to the actual location of the incident.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Highway 71B | Thompson |
| 2. Highway 412 East | Robinson |
| 3. Highway 412 West | Sunset |
| 4. Highway 265 (North of Randall) | Old Wire |
| 5. Highway 265 (South of Randall) | Old Missouri |
| 6. Bypass | I 540 or Interstate 540 |

DISPATCH EXAMPLES

Scenario 1

A caller is reporting a fire in their house at 1103 Henryetta. The dispatcher would tone and say the following:

“Engine 2, Engine 1, Truck 1, Rescue 1, Squad 1, residential structure fire at 1103 Henryetta, cross street Robyn and Melissa.” (Pause for 2-3 seconds without un-keying the mic and then continue) *“Engine 2, Engine 1, Truck 1, Rescue 1, Squad 1, residential structure fire at 1103 Henryetta, cross street Robyn and Melissa.”*

Scenario 2

A caller is reporting an industrial accident with the patient trapped in machinery. The dispatcher would tone and say the following:

“Engine 2, Truck 6, Engine 4, Rescue 1, Squad 6, industrial accident with entrapment, Keeling Company, 1203 Carley, cross street Sunset and Springdale.” (Pause for 2-3 seconds without un-keying the mic and then continue) *“Engine 2, Truck 6, Engine 4, Rescue 1, Squad 6, industrial accident with entrapment, Keeling Company, 1203 Carley, cross street Sunset and Springdale.”*

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UNITS RESPONDING

On every dispatch after all units assigned to the call have reported they are responding, the dispatcher is to give the units post dispatch information. The dispatcher should always repeat the business name or common name, address or intersection, cross street, and then provide the information provided by the caller. Dispatchers should be mindful of the responding unit's proximity to the incident location when giving post dispatch information. For example, when Station 6 units respond to the Holiday Inn, the information needs to be as concise as possible and immediate so that the units are able to check on scene and are not covered.

On all fire calls, the second due engine is responsible for water supply and the first due engine company needs knox box location information. After all assigned units have reported they are responding and there is knox box information for a location in the CAD, provide the info to the first due engine.

DELAYED RESPONSES

SFD regulations require a maximum responding time of two minutes on all calls. Radio difficulties or other circumstances may cause a delay in the responding time. For this reason, if a full two minutes go by without a unit responding to a call, the dispatcher shall re-tone the call and repeat the dispatch stating that it is the second tone out. The dispatcher also needs to log in the CAD call narrative that a second tone out was given. If a unit from a single station takes longer than two minutes to respond after the rest of the units have checked responding, the dispatch will need to be repeated for that station only. If a unit is in quarters and has not responded after the second alert tone, call the station and check the unit's status / condition.

If a rural fire department fails to respond after four full minutes, issue a second tone and log it in the CAD call. If four full minutes pass after the second tone out and there is still no response from the rural agency, contact Battalion One and advise him of the call type. Battalion One will then determine whether to commit Springdale units to the rural call.

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UNITS CHECKING ON SCENE

The first unit to check on scene of an incident will give a scene size up message. If the situation warrants, that unit will also advise they are going to Tactical Channel 1. This will let other responding units know that any further traffic regarding that incident will be handled on the tactical channel instead of Fire Channel 1. The dispatcher shall repeat back on Fire Channel 1 what the first unit advised as benchmark traffic. At that point, all of the responding units should switch their radios to Tactical 1 and check on scene on Tactical 1. As the units check on scene, the dispatcher should acknowledge them on Fire Channel 1. By doing this, all of the units still in their station will keep updated on the incident. For any units that the dispatcher did not copy checking on scene, verify with the Incident Commander whether or not that unit has arrived.

SCENE SIZE UP MESSAGES

A scene size up message is an evaluation or assessment of the incident. The size up is an ongoing process of evaluating a situation to determine what has happened, what is happening, what is likely to happen, and what resources will be needed to resolve the situation.

When the first arriving unit checks on scene, the officer will verbally give a scene size up. This information is helpful to the dispatcher and to the other responding units and Battalion Chief so they will know what kind of situation is actually occurring.

An example of a scene size up message: *“Engine 2 on scene, we have a two story single family residence with heavy smoke showing. Engine two Command and going to TAC1.”* Dispatch shall repeat the size up message on Fire Channel 1 by stating *“Engine 2 on scene, reporting two story single family residence with heavy smoke showing, Engine 2 is Command, all responding units go to Tac1”*.

The size up information given over the radio shall be typed into the call narrative in the CAD for documentation purposes.

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TACTICAL CHANNELS

The tactical channels will be used on larger incidents to keep the main channel open for traffic. The Battalion Chief will monitor both channels. The dispatcher may speak to command on the tactical channel; however transmissions need to be kept short and to the point. If the tactical channel is busy with traffic from the units on scene working the incident, the Dispatcher will need to direct their traffic to Command on Channel 1.

When our units respond on a mutual aid with another agency, they should switch to that agency's TAC channel for all fire ground communications. Whenever we have several large scale incidents going on simultaneously, to avoid tying up Channel 1 the following should be the order that TAC channels are used.

1. Tactical 1
2. Tactical 2
3. Tactical 3
4. Borrow tactical channels as needed

If an incident is already in progress on a TAC channel, include in the dispatch of any additional assignments which TAC channel they will need to operate on.

An example of a TAC channel assignment: *".....smoke and flames showing from the west side of the structure. Building is being evacuated at this time. All units need to operate off of TAC 2."*

INCIDENT TIMES ON WORKING STRUCTURE FIRES

When units respond to structure fires, incident times shall be given at regular intervals to help IC keep track of how long the structure has been burning. This will assist them in making the decision of keeping crews fighting the fire offensively or moving them to a defensive attack if the structure has been weakened by long exposures to extreme heat and fire. Incident times shall be given at 10 minute intervals to IC on Channel 1 until the incident is placed under control by the IC. The times will be measured from the time the call came in to dispatch, not the time the units were on scene. When you give the incident time to IC, he may or may not acknowledge. Log when scene times are given in the CAD call.

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RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM

When the first arriving company goes on scene and reports a working structure fire, Battalion 1 may advise dispatch to add a RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) assignment to the incident. A RIT assignment will include one additional Truck or Engine Company as the RIT and one additional Squad to establish a personnel rehabilitation area. Advise the responding units that they are being dispatched as the RIT assignment.

REENTERING CALLS INTO CAD

Occasionally, the CAD system goes down for maintenance and radio logs must be kept on paper. Once the CAD system comes back up, all calls must be reentered into the CAD system. When reentering CAD calls put the call into the system and assign all units that responded to the call. Correct all call and response times before ending the call. If the call is ended before times are corrected, the information will not be correct when it copies over to FireHouse.